

**INCIDENT**

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| <b>Aircraft Type and Registration:</b> | Boeing 767-200, Z-WPE  |                   |
| <b>No &amp; Type of Engines:</b>       | 2 Pratt & Whitney PW 4056 turbofan engines   |                   |
| <b>Year of Manufacture:</b>            | 1989   |                   |
| <b>Date &amp; Time (UTC):</b>          | 3 August 2008 at 1850 hrs  |                   |
| <b>Location:</b>                       | On approach to London Gatwick Airport  |                   |
| <b>Type of Flight:</b>                 | Commercial Air Transport (Passenger)   |                   |
| <b>Persons on Board:</b>               | Crew - 10  | Passengers - 206  |
| <b>Injuries:</b>                       | Crew - None  | Passengers - None |
| <b>Nature of Damage:</b>               | Detached slide, minor dents and skin perforation on fuselage aft of right wing trailing edge     |                   |
| <b>Commander's Licence:</b>            | Airline Transport Pilot's Licence  |                   |
| <b>Commander's Age:</b>                | 44 years   |                   |
| <b>Commander's Flying Experience:</b>  | 9,700 hours (of which 3,160 were on type)<br>Last 90 days - 250 hours<br>Last 28 days - 38 hours |                   |
| <b>Information Source:</b>             | Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and information from UK handling agents     |                   |

**Synopsis**

On final approach into London Gatwick, the right overwing escape slide separated from the aircraft. It is likely that this occurred as a result of the compartment opening.

**History of the flight**

The aircraft was making its final approach into London Gatwick Airport, on a passenger flight from Harare. The crew later reported that, on selecting flaps to 15°, they felt an unusual roll motion but the aircraft quickly stabilised. The crew continued the approach and the landing was normal, without further incident. During their post-flight external inspection, the crew noticed

that the compartment for the right overwing escape slide was open and the slide itself was missing. The actuating mechanism was hanging from the compartment and had caused slight dents and perforations in the adjacent fuselage skin.

A deflated overwing slide was found a few days later, under the approach path into Gatwick, and it was traced to the incident to Z-WPE. By that time the aircraft had been repaired and had flown several subsequent sectors. The aircraft had been repaired and dispatched without a detailed inspection to determine the cause of the slide compartment opening.

This inflatable overwing slide is mounted in an exterior fuselage compartment near the trailing edge of the wing and is designed to allow safe descent to the ground by passengers and crew using one of the overwing emergency exits. In later designs this function is performed by door-mounted slides, avoiding the complications of the exterior compartment and the actuation mechanism.

The aircraft manufacturer, Boeing, was able to conduct a limited investigation into the case of Z-WPE although, like the AAIB, it was unable to examine the hardware. It was established that the latch and door opening actuators had not fired, that the overwing escape hatch had remained securely latched and that, as the escape slide came out of the compartment, the inflation cylinder had discharged. The most recent

maintenance input into this system had been on 7 July 2008, following which the slide compartment door had been closed and latched.

Boeing had records of a number of previous instances of overwing escape slides detaching. These broadly fall into two categories: one category is the 'in-compartment inflation', which involves activating the inflation system while the slide compartment is closed and latched. This 'blows' the compartment door open as the slide inflates and leaves telltale evidence. This was not the case on Z-WPE.

The other category involves, generally, a combination of incomplete latching and, in some instances, an element of misrigging or worn components. It is likely that this occurrence, to Z-WPE, fell into this category.